

III. *A Letter from the Reverend Dr. Hugh Todd (S. T. P.) Sub-Dean and Prebendary of Carlisle, to Dr. Edmund Halley (L. L. D.) Savilian Professor of Geometry in Oxford, and Fellow of the Royal Society; Giving an Account of some Antiquities lately found at Corbridge in Northumberland.*

S I R,

SOME Years ago, when I was in Town, You were pleas'd to desire me, when my Occasions might carry me into that Country, to give You a particular Account of the Truth of a Relation, which was sent up to the *Athenian Society*, of the entire Skeleton of a prodigious Monster, of Humane Form, above 22 Foot in length; which was discover'd upon the Banks of the River *Tyne*, not far from *Corbridge*, in *Northumberland*. The Relation was very particular; and, if it had been true, seem'd to go farther towards a Proof of such stupendous Figures, in ancient Times; than any other Argument, that I have met with, upon that Subject.

Last Summer, my Affairs oblig'd me to stay three or four Days at *Corbridge*. During my being there, I made the best Observations I could, to give both my Self and Others Satisfaction, in an Account of a Matter of Fact; which had amus'd the Nation, so much, as that had done.

That

That I may be more Exact and Satisfactory, in what I have to offer, I shall give You an Account, I. Of the Place itself, and of the Antiquities, that are there. II. Of the Bones and Teeth, which are discovered there; and said to be of so prodigious a Bigness. III. I shall offer my Thoughts of the Matter; with Submission to Your, and Other, better Judgments.

I. The Place where the Bones were found is not *Corbridge*, but *Colchester*, a Mile West of it, upon the N. Banks of the River *Tyne*: formerly a Roman Colony; but, at present, a Field of Corn; nothing of Antiquity remaining, but some Walls and Rubbish; which shew it to have been a very large Fortress. Stones, which have been dug up, with Figures and Inscriptions upon them, have been All remov'd to *Corbridge*, which has rise out of its Ruins. There, I saw Altars inscrib'd; One IMP. M. AVRELIO.... Another LEG. II. AVG. COH. III. But That, which is most Remarkable, is that which stands in a corner of the Church-yard, Dedicated to *Hercules*, in Old Capital, Greek Characters; the like to which, is not to be met with, I think, in any other Part of this Island. The Characters, are in different plain; and, as I could read them, thus;

⊃ Η Ρ Α Κ Λ Ε Ι ⊂

⊃ Τ Υ Ρ Ι Ω ⊂

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⊃ Α Ρ Χ Ι Ε Ρ Ε Ξ ⊂

i. e. *Herculi Tyrio Divina Dona, Archi-Sacerdotalia*; vel, *per Summum Sacerdotem offerenda*. The Altar seems to have been

been Erected, by some of the *Asiatick, Phœnician, Auxilia-*
ries ; who might be in Garrison here, near the Frontier,
under *Urbicus Lollius*, in the Time of *M. Aur. Antoninus*,
about *A. D.* 140. The Altar is very large ; hollow at
the Top, (as usual) for Incense : On the Sides, are in-
grav'd a Bull's Head ; with Garlands, and Sacrificing
Instruments.

II. The Teeth and Bones, which were discover'd, by
the River *Tyne's* breaking in upon the Bank, were found
near the Foundations of the Old Fort ; and neither
higher up, nor lower down, than the Ruines of it seem
to reach. I examin'd the Person who made the first
Discovery ; and had Money for presenting some of the
Bones, from some Gentlemen in the Neighbourhood ;
who, in all probability, gave in the Account, and their
Queries upon it, to the Gentlemen of the *Athenian So-*
ciety : And I was as exact, as possible, in the Remarks,
which I made my self upon the Spot. Upon the whole,
it appear'd to me : That there never was an entire Ske-
leton found in that Place. The Teeth and Bones, lye
in the Bank, in *Strata's* ; sometimes at one, sometimes
at two Yards depth, for above 200 Yards in length.
In some places, there appears to have been a sort of
Pavement or Foundation of Stone ; which runs along
with the Bones, *stratum super stratum* ; sometimes above,
sometimes below them. The Bones are of different
Sizes : The Teeth, which are most perfect and entire,
are very large ; some three or four Inches in compass :
Ribs, Shank-Bones, &c. (many of them) not exceeding
the ordinary Dimensions of those of Sheep and Oxen.
I could meet with no Remains of Horns ; those being
more easily corrupted, than the Bones, which are of a
harder Substance. The Teeth look as if they were Hu-
mane ; but I cannot affirm them to be so : And they lye,
sometimes, at so great a distance from the Ribs and
Shank-Bones ; that should any One compute (as I sup-
pose

pose the Querists might do) the Length of the Monster, from One to the Other, they might calculate his Longitude, to 200, or 300 Yards, as reasonably, as to 22 Foot. The Teeth and Bones, are in such Quantities; that, with the help of a Labourer or two, You might in a few Hours, gather a Bushel of them.

III. From the Account I have given, it may not be unreasonable to infer: That the Altar, here Dedicated to the *Tyrian Hercules*, was very famous and much frequented: That, Oxen, and such like Creatures, as Bisons and Bonassus, (with which the Country hereabouts did anciently abound: The entire Head and Horns of One, being lately dug up, in a marshy Ground; resembling exactly those Creatures, as they are describ'd by *Gesner*, and Others,) were Sacrificed thereon: And, that their Bones being All thrown together; and, according to the Superstition of those Times, laid under the Foundation and Pavement of the Fort, are the very same Bones, Teeth, Skulls, Ribs; &c. which, by the Rivers washing away the Bank, are now discover'd, and brought to Light. And, if I might be allow'd to guess a little farther; I might think it not impossible, That (as *Erkelens* in *Gelderland*, is *Herculis Castra*; and *Hertland* in *Cornwall*, was *Herculis Promontorium*, So) upon the Recess of the Romans, the Saxons who succeeded them, might call this Noted Station *Hercul-ceaster*, and by corruption, *Colceaster*; or *Colchester*, is Modern Name. And, what may somewhat confirm the Conjecture, the adjacent Town of *Corbridge*, which, as I said, has risen out of its Ruins, is called in the Charter of *H. I.* (whereby that King gave it to the Secular Canons of *Carlisle*, before the Erection, either of the Priory or Bishoprick,) *Colbruge*, and *Colburgh*, the same as *Col-ceaster*: The Bridge, from whence it may seem to take its Denomination, being of a much later Erection. That Oxen
used

used to be Sacrificed to *Hercules*, there needs no other Evidence, than the Altar itself; whereon an Ox's Head, with Sacrificing Instruments, are delineated. You will receive by the *Oxford* Carrier, a great many Teeth and Bones; whereby You may be able to give a much better Judgment, whether they are Humane or no, than I can: only, I would observe this, That if it do not appear that they agree perfectly with the Teeth and Bones of Oxen, it will not follow that therefore they must be Humane, and that there were Men of prodigious Stature who made use of them; seeing, as I said, there were in these Parts, other Creatures of very great Size, to whom they might belong, and of whose Teeth and Bones, we have, now, very few Specimens, to compare them with. Thus, with some trouble both to You and my Self, I have perform'd my Promise; and shewn, what I shall be ready to do upon all Occasions, that I am with great Esteem,

Carlisle, Febr. 17.
1710-11.

Your very affectionate Friend

And humble Servant,

HUGH TODD.